

LOADSTAR LETTER

"Special News, Eulogy & Rumors Issue!" • Since 1984 • Number 11 • June 1994

Commodore To Liquidate

05/02/94 WEST CHESTER, PENNSYLVANIA, U.S.A., 1994 MAY 2 (NB) -- After months of speculation surrounding its financial stability, Commodore International, one of the personal computer industry's pioneers, has announced plans to enter into voluntary liquidation.

A month after reporting an \$8.2-million second-quarter loss and admitting it was on the verge of financial collapse, Commodore has announced it is transferring its assets to trustees for the benefit of its creditors and placing its major subsidiary, Commodore Electronics Limited, into voluntary liquidation. Both companies will be liquidated, officials said.

Repeated attempts to obtain further details from the company brought no response by Newsbytes' deadline.

Commodore, once a typewriter repair shop and later a maker of calculators, was among the first entrants into the personal computer business in the late 1970s. After considerable success with its PET series of business computers in the late 1970s, the early 1980s saw the low-priced, eight-bit Commodore 64 computer chalking up respectable sales volumes in the home computer market.

In 1985, Commodore launched the Amiga, a powerful personal computer with strong graphics features. By that time, however, IBM and its imitators had taken the largest share of the personal computer market, leaving a slice for Apple Computer's Macintosh but not much room for the Amiga to make its mark.

The Amiga "really was spectacular for manipulating and playing with video," noted Toronto-based personal computing consultant Richard Morochove, but it never took a significant market share.

Commodore also tried to get into the home multimedia market, first with the CD-TV and then with the CD32. Both machines used the same internal workings as an Amiga, but came with a built-in compact disc read-only memory (CD-ROM) drive and were meant to play entertainment and education CD-ROM titles at home.

After the CD32 was launched, Commodore officials admitted the original CD-TV had been a disappointment. They hoped the more powerful CD32 would do better, but as the company collapsed it was still struggling to make the device catch on.

Commodore's attempt to grab a piece of the market for PCs compatible with IBMs met with more success in Europe and Canada than in the United States, but in recent months that too started to fade.

Early this year, the Canadian subsidiary, Commodore Business Machines Limited of Toronto, turned over the right to sell Commodore-brand PCs to most buyers to another company, 3D Microcomputer Wholesale and Distribution (Canada), keeping for itself only the government, education, and institutional markets. At the time, Doug MacGregor, president of Commodore Canada, told Newsbytes that his company was finding it harder and harder to compete in the DOS PC market.

In early March, the Australian subsidiary, Commodore Business Machines (Australia), of Sydney, was put into

liquidation, with total debts of about AUS\$3 million.

The parent company said in late March that its financial problems were constraining sales of all its products, while poor economic conditions and a weak computer game market were further crippling the CD32.

While Commodore was a PC industry pioneer, the company had faded into relative obscurity in recent years, to the point where few but the minority of Amiga users will notice it is gone, Morochove told Newsbytes.

"Somehow they lost their leadership and weren't able to regain it," he said. "For the last few years they haven't been a major player in the PC market." (Gran Buckler/19940502/Press Contact: Commodore International, 215-431-9100/AMIGA940502/PHOTO)

Hot Off The German Press Wires...

Commodore computer goes bankrupt, Frankfurt unit says
FRANKFURT (MAY 5) DPA - Commodore International Ltd., the home personal computer company, faces bankruptcy and has filed for liquidation which will see its units around the world closed or sold off, Commodore of Germany said Thursday.

A spokeswoman for Commodore Bueromaschinen GmbH in Frankfurt said that the Nassau, Bahamas-based parent company hoped to continue operations on a smaller scale, while still keeping the "Commodore" and "Amiga" trade names, with the help of an Asian investor.

"Only five people here know the name of the investor," said spokeswoman Karola Bode.

She said that some of the 35 Commodore units worldwide had already been liquidated. Others stand to be closed while those which were still profitable - including companies in Scandinavia, Italy, Canada and Germany - would probably continue operations.

In the 1992-93 year which ended last June 30, Commodore International lost 356 million dollars, on turnover of 591 million. At the time it had some 1,500 employees.

Commodore made its reputation by establishing the personal computer as a home product. After 1982, some 16 to 17 million of the 64-kilobyte "people's computer" C-64 were sold worldwide.

But the company ran into problems toward the end of the 1980s in finding a successor to the C-64, at the same time that the competition was developing and marketing increasingly sophisticated PCs at lower prices, market analysts say.

A further mistake may have been Commodore moving too sluggishly and too late in entering the market of IBM-compatible computers.

Rumors & Talk Riding On The Information Superhighway

MICROTECH BBS 19.2K/2400/1200 (708) 851-3929. It's now Sat 7-May-1994 10:25p News Bulletin: Amiga Continues! (Fri 6-May-1994 5:33p) Here is the latest news from our COMMODORE REPRESENTATIVE (not BBS or the usual rumor mill): As of 4:00PM Friday, May 6, Commodore was

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purchased by Samsung, who has every intention of continuing the Amiga line of hardware as we have all hoped. The Amiga will survive! Press releases with more details will probably appear in the next few days.

The separate division of Commodore which manufactures CD-32 has been purchased by Philips. It is not known at this time if Philips will continue CD-32 production at all, or if the CD-32 technology will simply be absorbed into their own CDI product line. Again, time will tell.

Personally, I expect CD-32 to simply vanish, and the Philips CDI machine will suddenly get more powerful. Stay tuned... As we hear OFFICIAL announcements, we'll post them.

From: rwm@unlinfo.unl.edu (Roger McPherson)

Subject: News From UK

Date: 5 May 1994 04:41:18 GMT

News from the UK May 4, 1994

The following information was obtained through a phone call I had with the editor of Amiga Shopper on May 4, 1994. All information came from an Official Press Release faxed to them earlier that day.

"Commodore International has filed for protection from creditors in the Bahamas. All production, distribution and normal operations will continue as normal for the next few weeks. At that time another press release will be made."

The current rumor in the UK is that Commodore is in discussion with Samsung about purchasing the company. **WHAT DOES THIS MEAN???** Our favorite computer will still be in full production for the next 3 to 4 weeks. I view this as a positive sign.

If Commodore were going to cease to exist, production would have been stopped and layoffs would have taken place. The only layoffs at the present time are in West Chester.

As for the rumor, Samsung has recently announced that they will introduce a CDI, 3DO, and 2 CD video modules late in the year. CD32 would be another good choice if a company was looking to dominate the CD video industry.

Look for further posting, as I will try to reach CBM Canada in the near future. Sean Klein ITI Marketing Services Lincoln, Nebraska =-{ Roger }=- =-{ KAOTGE }=- =-{ rwm@unlinfo.unl.edu }=- Real AMIGA Technician "What do you mean it's broke? Plug it in" Mueller Planetarium =-{ ILDA }=- Nebraska the Good Life Lead Volunteer Electronic Technician Where Football is the State Religion

From: Lonnie McClure <lmclure@delphi.com>

Subject: Re: What if???

Date: Sat, 7 May 94 02:25:51 -0500

In a message dated 5-3-94, Nicholas J. Kingsley said:
>"Now that Commodore has (supposedly) gone, I wonder if Atari will
>buy the rights for the Amiga."

While Jack Tramiel would probably like to, they likely do not have the funds, and even if so, those funds are needed for the continuing rollout of their Jaguar videogame console.

From: paul@dino.eng.monash.edu.au (paul)

Subject: Re: What if???

Date: 5 May 1994 12:47:56 GMT

Not if Atari US are in the same condition as Atari Australia. In the last month Atari Australia has been given to liquidators. Any customer repairs have been transferred by agreement to another company, as is the case with Commodore Aust. It's quite ironic that the two companies, both each others biggest enemies would close within a few months of each other.

Eulogy For Commodore

From: mjf@clark.net (Marc Fraioli)

Subject: A eulogy for Commodore

Date: 1 May 1994 17:06:57 GMT

Let me start off by saying that I pretty much abandoned Commodore 3 years ago, so I guess this is in some small way partly my fault. Not that I feel guilty really, but I thought I'd get

that out in the open right from the start.

The first computer I ever owned was a VIC-20. I was in 8th grade at the time, and saved my money to buy it. Bought a B&W TV from a friend for \$35 to use as a display. Eventually got a datasette, and finally a 1541. It's amazing how excited I was about being able to store 170k on a floppy, and how *fast* I thought that thing was. Bought a C= 801 printer too. I even got Commodore's 16k RAM expansion, giving me 21k total. I was in heaven. Imagine how I felt when I retired the VIC, and got a C64. Got a Seikosha dot matrix printer, where the lowercase letters like 'g' and 'y' actually dipped below the line they were on, instead of sticking up and looking ugly like on that old 801. Finally, I even got the C128, with a 1571 disk drive (double sided! wow!) and a genuine color monitor, with an 80-column text display.

I learned a lot about how computers work from those old things. They were hacker's machines-- you were encouraged to poke around (or should I say POKE around?). The number 49152 is permanently etched in my brain, even though I haven't used it in years now. How many people ever tried to cram a simple 6502 assembly routine into the cassette buffer on a C64? Ah, those were the days. Ok, so nostalgia isn't a big thing in the world of computers, but the end of Commodore triggered something in me.

In 1991, I was tired of my 128. I was out of college, working for a living with bigger, more powerful computers, and it felt too limiting. I looked at the Amiga. Looked long and hard. Fantasized about the SVR4 Unix-based Amiga. But in the end, it was just too expensive, compared to a generic 486 out of the back of Computer Shopper. Learned DOS (took about a week), and Windows. Decided they sucked. Moved on to OS/2, Linux. I hadn't thought much about Commodore in a while. And now they're gone. Am I just being silly here? I don't know.

You know, I still have all those old machines, even the Vic.

Marc Fraioli

From: jcassara@inca.gate.net (Joe Cassara)

Subject: Re: A eulogy for Commodore

Date: 1 May 1994 14:45:15 -0400

IMHO, you're not being silly. I think that Commodore users, no matter how much they hated the company management, are all a bit saddened by the fact that the company who brought us marvels like the VIC-20 is gone. I was given my first VIC-20 when I was the age of 5 years. It drove me crazy! I loved it very much. To my surprise, the very next day my parents had bought themselves a Commodore 64! Figure that! Two computers in an average American household! As the years went by and I increased my knowledge of BASIC, I would say that I purchased a total of 4 more Commodore computers, 2 more C64s, a 128D, and a +4. I grew up with them. There was nothing else. Every Saturday morning when the other kids were washing their brains watching cartoons on CBS, I would be typing away. Imagine my excitement when presented with a modem! It was a wonderful time. Next, of course, came the Amiga. Amiga 500....Amiga 2000....Amiga 3000....Amiga 1200... Then BANG! The end of the line...C=, in a flash of light on April 28, 1994 was no more. Gone, just like my home when Hurricane Andrew hit South Florida (taking all my C= stuff with it!)

I am a very shy teenager who grew up with few friends. What did I care? I had my Commodore computers! THEY were my friends. They didn't care about the way you looked, they way you spoke, the way you did ANYTHING! Just press RETURN after every line, that's all they wanted. In a way, I have lost a friend. I cannot say that I didn't give birth to a small tear when I heard the news of C= 's liquidation.

What computer will I switch to now that Commodore has crumbled? None. C= 's death has helped me make a decision that's been troubling my since the age of 14: Should I leave computers? Then entire mish-mash of things has gotten too big and boring for me. Windoze...# include..... interactive

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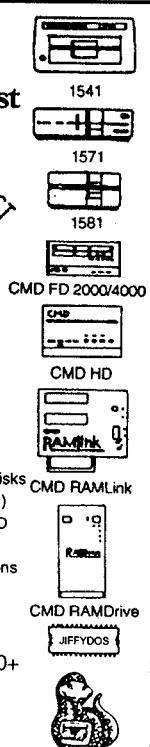
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Ever Heard Of Nissa?

Whenever the two Shreveport area NISSA affiliate boards aren't busy, I try to log on. NISSA is a nation-wide alliance of Commodore BBSs. It -- well, maybe I should let an expert explain. I received this Email from Captain Keelhaul:

Numb 3 [NetMail] From CAPTAIN KEELHAUL
Node #19, The Black Rose
Date Wed Apr 13, 1994 11:04 PM Subj: [NISSA]

Well, the *New Image Sysop Support Association* (NISSA) grew out of what was back in 1990 the Image Network. NISSA reorganized that network and began in August 1991 as a support vehicle for New Image SysOps both in and out of the network.

That month, the NISSA Tribune was first published. It was then just a series of text and program files for Image SysOps.

In August 1993, I was checking out your 105 "pass around" issue, and fell in love with Toolbox 105. I created a program we call the "NISSA Shell", that utilizes Toolbox 105 and lets us have a Commodore Graphic "front page" and menu driven text file access/printout. As they say, imitation is the greatest form of complement, and although the Tribune pales in comparison to Loadstar, your diskzine heavily influenced me to move our support newsletter-on-a-disk one more notch in that direction.

Currently we have about 25 boards in our network, but we are not alone! In fact, the node that you are calling from (The Neutral Zone) is a member of UBAN (the *United BBS Alliance Network*), which has 13 members. This interconnection of Image networks is thanks to a SysOp on yet *another* Image network! Dragon of Emerald Castle BBS is the System Administrator of

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POWER-Net. It was he who modified our existing netware so that different networks could share E-Mail, message bases and netwalls. Power-Net has around 9 nodes. I understand that a forth Image network (called **FREE-Net**) has joined our merry band! So all in all there are about 50 boards connected in this federation and it is growing.

About nine months ago I started the Loadstar message base, in hopes of raising the awareness of the Commodore community to your EXCELLENT magazine. I can't express how pleased I am that you are able to join in our online fraternity of Commodore 8-bit users! Thank you for the support you have directly and indirectly given us.

*Captain Keelhaul
NISSA Administration
The Black Rose BBS
(707) 557-6444*

PS: You might want to ask the other network Administrators for the lowdown on their particular nets. They are:

Network: POWER-Net Administrator: Dragon BBS: Emerald Castle BBS Number: (904) 282-1201

"multimedia"\$ ls.... alt.crap.cheese.worship.... It's all just too frustrating. So, thank you BIG C=, for both your company though my childhood and my rebirth in the teenage social world... Sure, Uncle Irv and Medhi are two of the world's largest kneebiters, but C= STILL WAS a good company. Too bad the package bombs I sent them didn't seem to work....:)

From: dcourt@opie.bgsu.edu (Des Courtney)

Subject: Re: A eulogy for Commodore

Date: Tue, 03 May 1994 20:05:51 +0500

First of all, I'm a Mac user. [waiting for the cries and boos to die down] You may be wondering what I am doing on a newsgroup about a computer I've never owned. Well, I'll tell you... an Amiga would have been my first choice if I found a store that sold them.

I was alerted to C= 's demise though a crossposting, and now I've spent the last hour reading the denials, comforting, and "I told you so's" that the event triggered. This posting was inspired by Joe Casara's post.

I was the same way, and I feel the same way. My first computer was a "Trash"-80 Color Computer 2 or "CoCo" as they were affectionately called. It was a gift from my father, who wanted to spend quality time with me. I knew then (1982) that I wanted to make computers my vocation. Like Joe, that computer (and the TI99/4a I got later) were my friends. During this time, I regularly read about C-64's and Amigas through magazines my mother got for me (I even got to dabble with a '64 for a short while.), so that is where my interest in Amigas came from. Over the years, I've collected an Atari 2600 (it's two companies now), an Intellivision (Mattel Electronics disappeared), and a SEGA Master System (can you say GENESIS?). The Color Computer disappeared and Texas Instrument's computer division got bought out. Obsolescence hurts, and I can understand the pain you of the Amiga community are going through.

But enough of my ranting, the real reason of this post is to ask if being in computers is worth it anymore. If any of you have tried, programming a Mac is difficult without \$\$\$\$\$\$ and years of time to read up on 200 page manuals. I've used a scripting environment, but it's painfully slow for making games. All my programming experience is in older languages like BASIC and Pascal, and on platform out of date or on non-PC operating systems (like VMS). Most computer jobs now are in the big business "grey walled" structure which I am aware most of you know and hate. There's very little of the "fun" and independence in computing that many of us were looking forward to when we started. It's depressing what a decade can do to a field. Are me and Joe the only ones to notice this?

I just had to get this off my chest; now to return you to your regularly scheduled lives.

From: hcole@tumbleweed.nrcabq.com

Subject: Re: A eulogy for Commodore

Date: 4 May 94 16:42:23 MDT

In article <dcourt-030594200551@mac154.cs.bgsu.edu> writes:

> *But enough of my ranting, the real reason of this post is to ask if
being in computers is worth it anymore. If any of you have tried,
programming a Mac is difficult without \$\$\$\$\$\$ and years of time
to read up on 200 page manuals.*

Hey, it's the difference between a professional and a hobbyist. When you dedicate yourself to software engineering as a profession, you take the time to keep up with the new technology, and read those 200 page manuals. Yes, this is a changing field - but *that* is what keeps it exciting. I think it would have been quite boring indeed if all we had were the TRS-80's and the Commodore 64s for the last decade. Don't get me wrong - those machines had their place and they had their day. But in this day and age, the technology marches relentlessly forward. And it keeps the field fresh and exhilarating!

> *Most computer jobs now are in the big business "grey walled"
structure which I am aware most of you know and hate. There's very*

> *little of the "fun" and independence in computing that many of
us were looking forward to when we started.*

Perhaps so. But then there are still fresh opportunities in the custom application development field. These are the places where a general purpose application doesn't exist because there is not a large enough volume to support it. And these are the places where a Lone Ranger can still ride in, be very creative, and be in control from beginning to end. I *hate* design-by-committee. A truly inspired application requires the vision of some individual to maintain the integrity throughout the design and coding process. Otherwise, compromises are made that usually degrade the resulting product.

Good luck in your quest to find your fun and independence - it can still be found, but you have to look harder for it. Howard Cole
Nichols Research Corp. Leaders on the trailing edge of technology

From: gpage@nyx10.cs.du.edu (george page)

Subject: Re: A eulogy for Commodore

Date: Thu, 5 May 94 22:25:21 GMT

Well, your sentiments regarding the "fun" missing out of the bigger systems echo my sentiments as well. I started on a VIC20, went to a 128 within a month, and have bounced back and forth between a C64 and a C128 ever since (about 7 years now). They have always been enjoyable for me, and easy to work with. I got into 'em late in life-in my mid '80's-but took to 'em pretty easily. I have learned a bit of UNIX now, just to deal with Internet, and finally bought an Amiga a few weeks ago just for a few utilities and graphics, and do have a Commodore 8088 PC in the attic. These I consider necessary utilities for some things, but I still feel much more comfortable and happy with these little 8-bit machines, and don't ever plan to abandon them until they pry the keyboard out of my cold, dead fingers! (or until I absolutely, positively have to go to a bigger machine to communicate with the outside world, etc.) And with some of the more recent developments in C= 8bit accessories and technology, I don't see that happening too soon. Heck, I'm running a "lowly" C= 128 with 16 megs hanging out the back, another 2meg in the Ram expander, 14,400 connect/38,400 text xfer online, ED floppies, whatever size HD I want to stick in this case... what's the rush? ;) George Page Commodore Enthusiast ("Collectors" get hit with higher prices.

From: paul@dino.eng.monash.edu.au (paul)

Subject: Re: A eulogy for Commodore

Date: 5 May 1994 12:38:37 GMT

I agree with all previous messages. It's a sad day in computing when one of the most instrumental and influential companies of our time has to close its doors. I started out in computers around 1980/81 using a friend's computer which was a locally made machine based on a Z80 CPU, 16k ram and a mono monitor. I guess it was this that started me off into the world of computers and electronics, and I had to have one of my own. I don't quite remember when but my parents bought me a "Wizard", which was another locally made machine, however this one had 16 colors, 16K ram, 6502 CPU and great sound. I guess I got it around late '82, because I remember going into Kmart about 6 months later and seeing it.. The machine, the computer that I wanted SOOOOOO badly!

Never had anything else captured my imagination, never had I wanted anything so bad, yes, I had seen the Commodore Business Machines model C64, on a 1701 color monitor with its 1541 disk drive. I had to have one.... And, luckily for me in September 1983 I became the proud owner of one Commodore 64 and 1531 data cassette. Soon after followed a SKATE 64 (1541 compatible) disk drive and modem.

Like so many others have mentioned I too used my 64 at every available moment. Instead of watching cartoons, playing in mud or mucking around I was typing away in BASIC and 6510 m/l. By 1986 I was heavily into the 64 BBS scene down here, as well as programming. Quite a few of the local BBSs were running C-

Net 64 V10 and V11, and after seeing my modified V10 quite a few converted over. We had it fully customized for Aussie date formats and phone numbers, had many external games, adjustable baud rates while online (remember 450 baud) and many other features. Shortly before I left the CBM world I had my C64, 1541 disk drive, SKAI disk drive, SFD 1001 and 2400 baud modem. Then, like most people I got sick and tired of its limitations and started the Intel path. So now I sit here, typing on a 486DX and wondering what went wrong? What happened at Commodore? I guess they lost the "edge". So now, in what I can only describe as as the computer version of a mid life crisis I am sitting next to a C128 with 1571 and Commodore 1084S monitor, an SX-64, an Amiga 500 (with all the usual bits) and, after being given to a few members of the family my faithful old original C64 ...

Ahhh, bring back the good ol' days of the C64, programming and communications. Might just go and boot up C-Net 64, just for ole times sake.

From: Paul Macarthur <paulmac5@delphi.com>
Subject: Re: A eulogy for Commodore
Date: Fri, 6 May 94 23:47:59 -0500

I would just like to say that I agree with the other writers here, it is a sad day to see the demise of Commodore computers. Like the others, I started out with a Vic-20, got it when I was 13. Saved for a month to get it and had my brother drive me in one of the worst thunderstorms in my part of the country we ever had to get it.

When I got it home my father said to me "how about we return it and get a apple". I said no, I've been dreaming of this machine for so long. Must of worn out the Service merchandise catalog before I got it.

Anyways, like the others, I went on to the 64, the 128 and then the amiga. But I found myself ending up using the 128 the most. Its easy, its fun and its a great hobby. Sure, Ill probably buy one of those multimedia machines some day soon, but Ill never part with my 64/128.

Because of commodore, my computer became my best friend of an otherwise lonely childhood, but my computer brought me out my shell. I met my wife on a local computer board. She also had a c64 (which we still have) and we are now happily married with 3 kids, house, 3 dogs, 2 cocktails a guinea pig and our c64.

I think years from now, people will look back and say the real pioneers in computing technology were the first commodore PC's and I think in a way they will envy those times for the innocence and excitement of those times.

I know, like others, I have very found memories of commodore computing and all it had to offer, but one thing is for certain and that nothing will ever stay the same for very long.

Goodbye Commodore!

From: lueck@power.amasd.anatcp.rockwell.com
Subject: never say die...
Date: 30 Apr 1994 18:51:37 -0500

Some of you may have already seen the story of the demise of Commodore. Several people I talked to have been unhappy - even depressed - about this event, thinking that is means the end to the c64/128 community. I don't think this is necessarily true at all.. not for a long time, at least, if those of us in the community stick together and help each other, through Usenet C.S.C, the Commodore listserv, the #C-64 channel on IRC, local c64 BBSs, and person-to-person contacts - email, post mail, voice, and even (leaving cyberspace now..) In-person contacts, including local users groups and get-togethers.

There have been, and still are, a lot of super individual and group efforts to provide new software and information about the c64 and about programming it. There is no reason why these ongoing efforts should not continue - and even grow! Those of us reading this KNOW the c64/128 is a great machine and want to

continue to use it for a LONG time. As long as the spirit (and the action) is there, so will there be a c64/128 community. We just all have to make sure that the spirit never dies.

- Bill Lueck

From: grizzly@eskimo.com (Jon Mines)
Subject: C= finally goes under...
Date: 30 Apr 94 16:04:51 GMT

I know most people reading this newsgroup don't care about the Amiga or what/how Commodore International, Limited is doing, BUT I thought I would post this anyway.

As of Friday - April 29th, 1994 - Commodore International, Limited and all its subsidiaries are being liquidated.

Commodore USA is being kept open for a few weeks with only 22 employees (mainly engineers) to hand off the "Amiga technology" to any C= buyer.

Some interesting facts: Commodore UK had two employees. Commodore Germany had three employees. Commodore Philippines production plant had three employees (shutdown now). The Scotland production plant has shutdown, it seems C= didn't pay them for the last batch of machines they made. Commodore Semiconductor Group has closed its doors, so you better grab those CSG chips you need now.

Every C= user knew this would happen eventually (didn't we?) I'm now the owner of two orphaned machines - 64 and Amiga 500.

Anyway, I just wanted to keep everyone up to date on the happens of C=.

Jonathan Mines

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